

WASHINGTON, DC -Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today received the Easter Seals Greater Washington-Baltimore Advocacy Award for his continued fight on behalf of people with disabilities.

"I am honored to receive this distinguished award," Hoyer said. "I know first-hand the impact that Easter Seals has had in my own community, and across the state of Maryland. For over seventy years, they have provided critical services to my constituents with disabilities, including education, childcare, adult day services, family support groups, and home and community based rehabilitation."

Hoyer said he is pleased to have partnered with Easter Seals on countless national legislative efforts over the years, including the historic Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

"This July, we will celebrate the 16th Anniversary of ADA, a landmark law that extended civil rights to an estimated 43 million people with disabilities," Hoyer said. "As the lead sponsor in the House of Representatives, I am proud that since 1990 we have seen signs of progress everywhere—ramps, curb cuts, Braille signs, captioned television programs, wheelchair lifts, and assistive listening devices at movie theatres, to name just a few."

While acknowledging this significant progress, Hoyer recognizes that there are still many great challenges ahead for the disability community. In particular, he expressed concern about the employment picture for people with disabilities, and said he is disappointed that Bush Administration policies have made job expansion more difficult. President Bush has proposed to cut funding for the Office of Disability Employment Policy by 57% since FY 2005, and the EEOC has documented troubling statistics about the number of people with disabilities in the federal workforce.

In addition, Hoyer criticized the lack of adequate federal resources for programs of importance to people with disabilities. "Regrettably, we are likely to soon vote on a budget that starves resources for a host of critical programs for people with disabilities including job-training, supportive housing, healthcare, and education," he said.

"There is clearly still much work that remains to be done," Hoyer added. "I remain steadfast in my commitment to enforcing the ADA and expanding opportunities wherever possible."

Easter Seals is the nation's oldest and largest non-profit organization dedicated to creating solutions that change the lives of children, adults and families with disabilities or other special needs. They deliver a wide variety of services to help people with disabilities, ranging from child development centers to physical rehabilitation and job training.

In April, Hoyer received the Tony Coelho Award for his work toward expanding job opportunities for people with disabilities.

###